

nature net

The Nature Kenya Newsletter

www.naturekenya.org

Dec06 & Jan07

World Bird Festival Prizes

1st prize for Highest % of possible birds in Atlas Square

Serena Hotels 2 nights Full Board
Sharing at a property in a low season month (April, May, November)

2nd prize for Second highest % of possible birds in Atlas Square

Alliance Hotels 2 nights Full Board
Sharing at Naro Moru in (January - May 07)

3rd prize for Best report back

Sarava Hotels Dinner for team at Flame Tree Restaurant, Nairobi (January 07)
A selection of reports will be published. Photos/digital images much appreciated. Please note that material sent, including photos, will not be mailed back, nor do we take responsibility for lost material.

4th prize for Most outstanding team effort

Sarova Hotels Lunch for team at Thorn Tree Cafe, Nairobi (January '07)

Other prizes for **Support to the World Bird Festival & Getaway Programme**

Alan Bobbe's Bistro & Westlands Sundries
Dinner for two with wine (up to Dec 31) and two copies of Jonathan Scott's Birds of Kenya

Windsor Golf & Country Club for Best Nature Kenya staff & volunteer effort
Exotic Aromatherapy Manicures

Nairobi Arboretum is 100 years in 2007

Come to the Arboretum
Sat.13 & Sun. 14 January for
celebratory entertainment,
workshops, food & drinks

Gardening and Compost making

at Nairobi Arboretum

19 Jan. '07,

9:00 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.

700/- per person, book by
5th Jan. tel: 2725471 or
<fona@naturekenya.org>

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The Sarit Centre



**A big THANK YOU! To
all who participated
and volunteered time
and support.**

Kenya Birds 11: 2

is published!

Enclosed with this
newsletter to subscribers

*Camp at Elementaita
23 - 25 February '07*

A Youth Group organised activity

Birdwatch, visit Kariandusi Prehistoric site and nearby hot springs. Cost is Ksh. 1600 inclusive of transport, food, camping and guiding fees. Book at Nature Kenya by 16th Feb. '07.

Editorial Team

Editor Catherine Ngarachu
Evening Skies Fleur Ng'weno
Naturalist's Corner Dino Martins
Action Serah Munguti

Kim Howell's
talk and book
signing



*Ecological
effects of a
hydropower
dam & the
Kihansi
Spray Toad*

A Talk by

Dr. Kim M Howell

Tuesday 19 December

5:30 pm at the Louis Leakey Hall,
Nairobi Museum

An illustrated talk by the author of **A Field Guide to the Reptiles of East Africa & Packet Guide to the Reptiles and Amphibians of East Africa**. The guides will be on sale and you can also bring a book you have already for Kim to sign.

African Waterfowl Census Jan '07 Volunteer Registration

The Ornithology Department, National Museums of Kenya, is pleased to announce the provisional dates for the January 2007 census as follows:

Lakes Bogoria & Nakuru NP 12 - 14th Jan. •
Lakes Elementaita, Naivasha, Sonachi & Oloidien
26th-28th Jan. • Lake Baringo 2nd - 4th Feb. • Lake
Magadi 17th - 18th Feb. • Nairobi (Nat. Park and
other wetlands) Wed Morning Bird walks • Lake
Victoria, North Coast & Central 12th - 28th Jan.

All birders welcome! Register with the Ornithology Department by filling the Volunteer Recruitment Form. Volunteers able to bring their own cars (4WD) and assist in the transportation of participants are most welcome because we are short on vehicles. The contact person for Volunteer Registration is Mwangi Geoffrey <mwaiffea@yahoo.com> (mobile 0721-226452); for other water-bird queries contact Simon Musila <sumbirds@yahoo.com> (Tel 020 3742131 ext 263 (or 242/3), mobile: 0735-675281) or Wanyoike Wamiti <wamsnarina@yahoo.com> (mobile 0722-574529)



Water tank and Pump house at Ngerenya

Water pipeline improves lives for communities at the Kenya coast

To support conservation of the Arabuko-Sokoke Forest and reduce human-wildlife conflicts, Nature Kenya commissioned a water pipeline near the forest. It is eleven kilometre long, with water kiosks every kilometre. It benefits communities in Nyari, Maziani and Dzunguni Villages in Kilifi District, and is already greatly improving communities' access to water for household use and farm production.

Previously, the communities' main source of water were pools within the forest. These same pools were wild animal watering points. The water project also supports on-farm tree nurseries and sustainable farming, food storage and processing. The project is supported by the German BirdLife Partner NABU and Kindernothilfe.

Friends of CITY PARK ...

Approval of plot development causes outrage

The approval for development by the Nairobi City Council, of an area of City Park, located in Parklands, Nairobi, featured in last month's *Nature net*, has been rescinded. The Friends of City Park issued a Press Release on Thursday 19 October '06 and sent letters to the Town Clerk, Director for Environment, and the Mayor. Although the letters have gone unanswered the information in the press and the Mayors' response on television, indicates that City Hall was 'deceived' by the developer and the approval has been rescinded.

• Classic 105 radio featured City Park on the 24 October '06 and Capital FM interviewed the Friends Committee on 3 November '06 (aired on 4th November).

As the plot in question includes the graves of former Vice-President Joseph Murumbi and his wife Sheila, the approval caused considerable outrage. This was echoed in both *The Daily Nation* and *The Standard* in editorial and articles on 11 and 12 November '06.

The mayor held a press conference with media and the Friends, featured on the KTN and Citizen TV on Saturday 11 November '06. The Mayor sought to assure the Friends, the Murumbi Trust and the general public that the allocation will be rescinded and the appropriate officers who approved it will be held accountable, as City Park is public land for recreational and educational use.

H5N1 Update

Newcastle disease in domestic and wild birds

In September, widespread deaths of doves were reported in various parts of the country, including Olorgesailie, Magadi and North Eastern. All birds tested negative for bird flu. Tests revealed Newcastle disease in the dead birds from North Eastern. Newcastle disease (ND) is a highly contagious,

common viral disease of domestic poultry and wild birds. The recent outbreaks have also affected poultry in some parts of the country. Further tests are being carried out to determine causes of death in the Magadi/ Olorgesailie doves. There are some reports that dove deaths may be due to accidental poisoning by pesticides used on cattle or seeds.

Surveillance work for avian flu in Kenya continues. To report unusual die-offs in wild or domestic birds call this hotline: 0722 726682

Training Opportunities

FUNDAMENTALS of Ornithology

A Certificate course for bird guides and birders
Elsamere Field Studies Centre,
Lake Naivasha 1 – 8 March 06

This is a popular week-long course in field ornithology designed for amateur and professional bird guides and birdwatchers who want to improve their understanding of birds and their birding skills in the field. Teaching is through illustrated lectures, discussion sessions, group seminars, demonstrations and field practicals, in an informal environment.

Fees and application:

Ksh 26,000 per person (US\$400 non resident rate), which includes full board accommodation, transport to and from Naivasha town and during field outings, course materials and equipment.

Applicants must have some birding experience, and at least KCSE level of education. A non-refundable deposit of 13,000/- (or US\$200) must accompany applications (balance to be paid by 15 Feb. '07). Only 20 places available - book now!

Applications and inquiries, should be addressed to: Anthony Kuria, Course Coordinator, at the Nature Kenya contacts or email fornithology@yahoo.co.uk

Earthcorps 2007

EarthCorps offers a 6-month training course in Seattle, Washington, USA that brings together young representatives (18-25 years of age) of international organizations to learn the basic fundamentals of environmental restoration, community organizing, and youth empowerment.

EARTHCORPS CHARGES NO FEES for its services and in fact supplies insurance, individual homestays, gear, and a monthly stipend to all international participants. EarthCorps provides additional support in acquiring US J-1 Trainee visas.

Candidate Nomination: November 30, 2006 Applicant Application Dead Line: December 31, 2006

For qualification needed and application:

Candidates should be referred to EarthCorps by an environmental organization. Materials are available online at www.earthcorps.org/join_international.php You can also contact the International Coordinator via email mark@earthcorps.org if you have any questions.

EVENING SKY

Ian Mackay & Fleur Ng'weno

Moon, December 2006

Dec 5th - full moon; Dec 12th - last quarter moon;
Dec 20th - new moon; Dec 27th - first quarter moon;

Sun

Solstice, December 22. The sun is at its furthest south, viewed from the Earth. It is the start of summer in the Earth's southern hemisphere, start of winter in the north.

Stars, December-January

Brilliant stars rise in the eastern sky on December evenings, and fill January skies. Look for the distinctive constellation of Orion, the Hunter - three bright stars in a row, with four bright stars like a box around them. Orion rises due east in December evenings, climbing higher each night. (In reality, it is our Earth that is traveling around the sun.)

North of Orion is the V-shape of the Hyades cluster. The reddish star Aldebaran, the fiery eye of the constellation Taurus, the bull, is at the open end of the "V".

Further north, several fairly bright stars are grouped close together - the Pleiades or Seven Sisters of Greek myths. With binoculars, you can see more stars and a glowing blue haze.

Low in the north, the constellation Cassiopeia forms the shape of a letter "M".

In December, the bright star Achernar is still prominent, low in the south. As the year ends, Sirius, the brightest star we can see at night, rises southeast of Orion. Canopus, the second brightest star, appears further to the south.

Planets, Dec.06 -Jan. 07

The brilliant planet Venus appears in the sunset in mid-December and remains a splendid sight for the new year and the rest of January. On December 21st, Venus is to the north of the crescent moon.

The other planets are in the morning sky: Saturn is almost overhead at sunrise, and just south of the moon on December 10th. Mars has risen into the morning sky and is getting higher each day. Jupiter has also emerged from the solar glare to become a morning planet for the next few months.

Mars, Jupiter and Mercury appear close together, low over the sunrise, on December mornings.

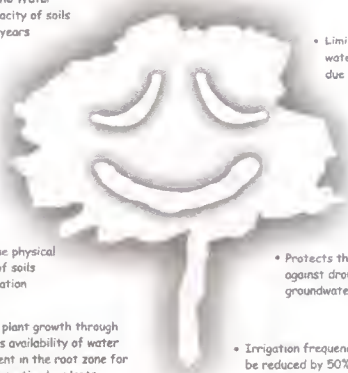
Mercury is very close to Jupiter at sunrise on December 10. On the 11th, Mars is just south of Jupiter at dawn. Mars is close to Mercury in the middle of December, when the two planets appear to pass each other. On December 18, Jupiter is directly north of the crescent moon.

In December, the Earth passes through some areas of space with floating bits of dust and rock fragments. Some of these may fall into the Earth's atmosphere and burn up, forming beautiful meteors or "shooting stars". They are often best seen after midnight. There may be meteors in early December, around the 6th, and again at the end of the month.

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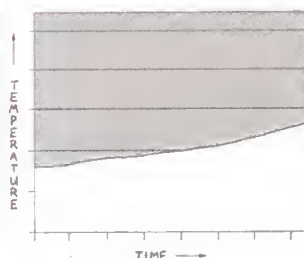
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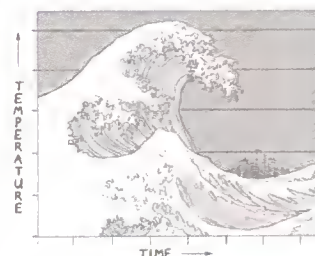
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THE GRAPH OF GLOBAL WARMING MAY START UNEVENTFULLY...



For more Chris Madden cartoons buy his book "The Beast that ate the Earth" from his website www.chrismadden.org

BUT...



Wishing you a happy holiday season

gift your friends and family a Nature Kenya membership!

Gift a friend a subscription that gives them all the enjoyment and benefits that your membership gives you!

Purchase a publication as well, and we'll gift wrap it, ready for you to collect.

Note the Nature Kenya Nature Resource Shop is in a wooden prefabricated building enroute to the Snake Park

The Nature Kenya office closes on Fri. 22 Dec '06 & opens on Tues. 2 Jan '07

Up & about

DECLARATION

Nature Kenya does not accept any responsibility whatsoever in respect of negligence of any of its staff, volunteers or members organising the outings/trips or for any loss, injury, death or damage to property.

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRDWALKS

Bird watching walks at sites in and around Nairobi. Meet at the National Museum car park near Langi Langi cafe, every Wednesday at 8:45 a.m. Return about 12:30 p.m. Those who are not members can get temporary membership at Ksh 100 per birdwalk, payable on arrival at the car park.

FFJ Bird Walk (Coast)

Friends of Fort Jesus birdwalks are held the third Saturday of each month, i.e. 16 Dec '06 & 20 Jan '07. Please call Marlene Reid on (041) 491 648 to confirm

SUNDAY BIRDWATCH

Members meet at the National Museum, Nairobi car park near Langi Langi cafe, at 9:00 a.m. the third Sunday of every month, i.e. 17 Dec'06 & 21 Jan'07. The members decide where to go. Bring lunch

SAMAKI DAYS

Guided fish excursions on the first Thursday, i.e. 7 Dec '06 & 6 Jan'07 from 9:00 a.m - 12:30 p.m. Meet at the Nairobi Museum car park. Pay Ksh 50/- per person on arrival

Ngong Road Forest Walks

Ngong Road Forest Sanctuary Trust provides guided walks on request. Call Ignatius to arrange on 3875207 or 0720 976299.



KINANGOP GUEST HOUSE

Perched on the Kinangop Plateau with incredible views across the Rift Valley, the farm combines tussock-grass pasture, indigenous forest, and attractive gardens. The guesthouse is comfortable and fully furnished. Visitors can enjoy hikes and walks on the farm or go further afield with local guides.

For more information, brochure and non-member rates please contact Nature Kenya.

Guest House rates: Day visit 350/-
MEMBER nos Overnight Weekend
1 to 2 pax 4000/- 6500/-
3 pax 4,900/- 7,400/-
4 pax 5,800/- 8,300/-

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TREE WALKS

Guided tree walks in the Arboretum on the second Saturday and last Monday, i.e. 9 Dec '06/ 13 & 29 Jan '07 from 9:30 a.m. Meet at the Arboretum gate. Those who are not members of FONA or Nature Kenya pay Ksh 100/- fee on arrival at the gate.

Lake Victoria Sunset Birders (Kisumu)

The Lake Victoria Sunset Birders organise bird walks at sites in and around Kisumu every Friday of the month. For further details call 057 42952 or 0734 994938 or email lakevictoriasunsetbirders@yahoo.co.uk

Mt Kenya Biodiversity Conservation Group (MKBCG)

The MKBCG organise bird walks to sites around Naro Moru every last Saturday of the month

For more information contact 0722 364904, 0733 937115 or 062 62071 Email: mt_kebio@yahoo.co.uk

Birding at Kinangop

Friends of Kinangop Plateau organise birdwalks every third Friday of the month i.e. 15 Dec '06 & 19 Jan '07 at 9:00 a.m around Magumu and Njambini areas. To participate contact Bakari Ng'ang'a on 0721 470215

MARURA NAROK BIRDWATCHERS

A community group near Uaso Narok Swamp, Rumuruti, which organises birdwalks every last Saturday i.e. 30 Dec'06 & 27 Jan'07. Call 062 32718 or email olmaisor@africaonline.co.ke

ARABUKO-SOKOKE (COAST)

The Saturday birdwatch with the Arabuko Sokoke Forest Guides Association is on the first Saturday of each month i.e. 2 Dec '06 & 6 Jan '07, at 6:30 a.m. from the Visitor Centre, Gede. Cost 100/- per person. KWS fees now apply (100/- Citizens, 500/- Residents)

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(OPTIONAL - but useful to us in planning)

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Scopus (Ornithological Journal) 500
World Birdwatch

(the BirdLife International magazine) 1500
Succulenta East Africa 400

Friends of Nairobi Arboretum
Single - 400/-, Student - 250/-, School or Club - 800/-
African Bird Club (Student 500/-) 800

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Total

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